

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS, NEWS

# LYNN EDIC WILL PUT FOCUS ON FORMER LAUNDRY

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BY GAYLA CAWLEY | April 17, 2022

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LYNN — The Economic Development & Industrial Corporation of Lynn (EDIC/Lynn) is seeking the public's input as it plans for the future of the former Whyte's Laundry site.

The downtown site at 83 Willow St. has been a vacant and contaminated property for decades. Its last use was a laundry facility that operated from the 1930s to the 1990s, according to EDIC.

EDIC and the city have talked about the importance of revitalizing this site in the past. Before any redevelopment of this property can occur, it has to undergo a major cleanup and remediation effort, which would make the site safe for a future use.

In addition to the contamination at the Whyte's Laundry site, the pollutants have seeped vertically into the soil and groundwater, which has affected nearby properties. The plume of toxins poses a threat to the indoor air of existing and future occupied buildings in the area. The site has been vacant since 2000, when the building was demolished, according to EDIC.

With funds in hand to begin to clean up the site, the focus has shifted toward planning for the future of the property, and the surrounding area. Toward that end, EDIC is hosting an open house on Wednesday, April 27, from 6-7 p.m., at 10 Church St.

Residents are invited to attend this community meeting to share their feedback on what they would like to see at the site.

"It's an open house that will allow stakeholders in the community to come together to learn about the work EDIC has done relative to helping the city with the Whyte's Laundry site, and to talk about the future of what could happen down in that location as we get closer to trying to clean up the Whyte's parcel," said William Bochnak, project coordinator for EDIC. "It provides an engagement opportunity."

EDIC has secured nearly \$1 million in funding from MassDevelopment, the state's development finance agency and land bank, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to investigate the amount of pollution on the site and begin cleanup.

Bochnak said initial work began at the Whyte's Laundry site last July, with MassDevelopment's assistance.

"We were able to deploy \$250,000 worth of work," he said. "The bulk of that was remedial injections to address the contamination."

Bochnak said similar work will continue until the winter of 2023, which will include follow-up testing to see how successful this decontamination effort has been.

He said EDIC will also be seeking additional grant opportunities. It plans to apply for an EPA cleanup grant — which funds cleanup activities at brownfield sites — to build on the work it has done to date, Bochnak said.

EDIC said it has secured an additional \$50,000 grant from MassDevelopment, through its Community One Stop for Growth Brownfields program, to explore possible redevelopment in the area. This will fund a market analysis of the area, Bochnak said, which is being conducted by DREAM Collaborative, a Boston-based consultant assigned to EDIC by MassDevelopment. The study will help EDIC gain an understanding of what redevelopment is possible at the Whyte's Laundry site, given its economic, zoning and space constraints.

The upcoming open house will include a presentation from DREAM Collaborative, which will report its findings at the site so far. Bochnak said the hope is that this fosters some suggestions and discussion among residents attending the meeting.

"This exercise will look to hopefully identify opportunities," said Bochnak, who explained that the market analysis and open house are focused on nine parcels in the site area, centering in on the Whyte's Laundry site.

Ward 5 Councilor Dianna Chakoutis, who represents the area, said she has heard from many residents who are looking for a place to take their pets downtown. She said some residents have expressed interest in having a dog park in the area.

She is hopeful that many downtown residents will attend the open house and offer additional insight as to what they would like to see there. She said she is also interested in hearing what MassDevelopment has to say.

"MassDevelopment has a few ideas put together and we're looking forward to seeing what they're thinking we could do there," said Chakoutis.

A second open house will be held sometime in May, which will be geared toward reporting back to the community what was discussed at the first meeting, and looking at potential redevelopment opportunities relative to Whyte's and the surrounding area, Bochnak said.

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